

Notes on the Evolution of the SIOP

Like the West German pressure that followed the smysterious Radford Leak in July of 1956, protecting the Army budget from Admiral Radford's radical proposals to reduce it, it was the secretly prepared aggression by our British and French allies and our Russian "enemy" in the Fall of 1956 that saved the Army budget once again. As Taylor puts it: "The events in Hungary and Suez in late Fall made it impossible to thin of military force reductions." (Page 47) P The word "enemy" in the proceeding sentence must be put in quotation marks because from the point of view of the American Armed Services the action of the Soviets in the Fall of '56 was only one incident in a long pattern of virtual partnership with the services in their prolonged struggle for a share of the U.S. budget. From my experience working with officers in the Air Staff in the late '50's and early '60's, I can say that there was barely any ambiguity over the meaning of the word "enemies" in the context of conversation. Normally it referred to the Navy, that is the budgetary and planning officers of the Navy, Army planners, though seen equally evil minded in their willingness to distort or ignore the true requirements of "national security" in their parochial pursuit of their own services' interests, were a less serious rival. The Navy's pre-eminence as the "enemy" for the Air Force reflected the fact that the ability of Carrier Air and Polaris submarines to deliver strategic nuclear warheads made them direct rivals for the lion's share of the budget allocated to strategic forces, while the supposedly lesser accuracy, and smaller number of Polaris missiles encouraged the Navy to put forward a strategic doctrine, emphasising city-busting explicitly, which was at odds with the Air Forces' desire for a "balanced approach" destroying

all cities and all military targets. In a category of lesser adversaries shared by all three services included civilian members of the Department of Defense, or Members of Congress who were neither members of the military reserves nor Senior Southern Chairmen of House and Senate Appropriations and Armed Services Committees (whose states tended to be slowly sinking under the weight of military bases and military production facilities). The Russians were very far down on the list of enemies and indeed, as functional allies to all three services in the annual budget fight, were virtually indispensable.

Thus, Taylor later comments, without irony: "In the same way as the events in Hungary and Suez in the Fall of 1956 had protected the strength of the military services, now in October, 1957, the success of the Soviet satellite, Sputnik, proved a valuable ally in maintaining personnel levels and obtaining additional funds." (Page 53) This latest challenge was again timely since, following Hungary and Suez in the Fall of 1956, "Shortly after the turn of the year, however, concern over military events in Europe and the Middle East subsided while budgetary problems continued to mount." (Page 47) This threatened the Army going down from a million men to nine-hundred thousand, after all; and Sputnik, though valuable, was not entirely suited to reverse this possibility: "However, since Sputnik was primarily evidence of Russian progress in heavy missiles, it brought budgetary support mainly to the strategic delivery forces of the Air Force and of the Navy." (Page 53) Nevertheless, Sputnik did reinforce a floor of nine-hundred thousand men for the Army, and just in time, for, "Although during the Spring [of 1957] the Soviets had directed threats and warnings at Norway, Denmark, Greece and Iceland over the consequences of harboring Western troops and bases, the Summer was a comparatively quiet period. Hungary and Suez were

in the background of 1956; the shock of Sputnik I was yet to come in October of 1957. This short period of freedom from crisis was deemed opportune to propose a reduction of military forces somewhat along the line of the abortive Radford Proposal of the previous Summer." (Page 48) Meanwhile, Taylor notes that the National Security Council's review of the basic national security policy in 1956 and 1957 had been more favorable to the strategy of massive retaliation that had been the 1955 edition, revisions "modified the definition of limited war to introduce the thought that it was a form of military conflict occurring only in less-developed areas of the world, to be coped with by limited United States forces." Undertaking to hold the annual defense budget at the level of thirty-eight billion dollars in 1959-61, Secretary of Defense Wilson introduced unilaterally a long range program to the NSC calling for a drop in the Army from nine-hundred thousand to seven-hundred thousand men. In answer to Taylor's objections at a meeting discussing this plan, Taylor quotes Wilson as stating that it was based upon the "approved policy to 'maximize air power and minimize the foot soldier.'" In the midst of the budget dispute, Taylor reports, "we received an unexpected, though temporary, assist from the Russians," (Page 53) namely Sputnik, which however, did not save the Army from having its force levels trimmed to eight-hundred-and-seventy thousand men. In the midst of this dispute, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles published an article in the October 1957 issue of Foreign Affairs entitled "Challenge and Response in United States Policy" which purported (sp?) to modify the doctrine of massive retaliation associated with his name in the light of new technical developments. Taylor quotes the following passage with approval

(Here give the passage in brackets on Pages 55 and 56)

To those who had had access to the as-yet-unpublished classified manual Basic National Security Policy Papers, heavily influenced by Secretary of State Dulles, this shift in emphasis in the late '50's was foreseeable. In some contrast to his public statements, these private classified documents had reflected from the early '50's on the assumption that total reliance on a threat of strategic devastation of Russia was a wasting asset as the basis for deterring a wide range of Soviet aggressions, interventions or unwelcomed political changes in the world, limited to the transient period of affective American monopoly of strategic weapons. These earlier papers clearly recognized, as public statements of the Administration did not, that the day would soon come when a growing capability of the Soviet Union to retaliate against such massive uses of U.S. strategic power would effectively neutralize the credibility and thus the reliability of such threats. Indeed, as of 1953 and 1954, the date when such a shift from American rhetorical and practical reliance upon such massive threats was foreseen to fall well within the second Eisenhower term. As for the policy which such threats were meant to support, it was far less ambitious in practice, in secret, than in campaign rhetoric; whereas Dulles, Eisenhower and Nixon had spoken in 1952 of a need for "roll back" of Soviet power in Europe as opposed to a craven, passive and virtually pro-Communist policy of "containment". In fact, Dulles had a much more conservative view of the power afforded by the U.S. strategic nuclear monopoly even in '53 and '54, as indicated in Basic National Security policies and the hollowness of any claim that Republican policy was distinguished from that of its predecessor in ambition to change the status quo in Europe was demolished precisely in the Fall of 1956, when, so far as is known, no serious consideration whatever

was given to supporting effectively the moves or the efforts of the Hungarian people and government toward greater autonomy within the Soviet sphere. Meanwhile, as Sputnik seemed to herald the end of the U.S. strategic monopoly, the alternative deterrent proposed by Secretary Dulles for use throughout the "Free World" continued to be the threat of initiation of nuclear war by the U.S. or its allies in response to large scale non-nuclear operations. In the Spring of 1958, although Taylor enthusiastically supported "the need for expediting the program for small yield atomic weapons capable of contributing to the area defense" which Dulles hoped to realize, many in the Department of Defense "found the concept of area defense in the NATO territory obnoxious as it contravened the dogma that there can be no limited war in that region."

According to Taylor the Army won the support in the Spring of 1958 of the Navy and Marine Corp that "former statements of basic military policy were inadequate in an era of ^{nuclear deterrence} ~~neutral~~ deterrents and encouraged an undue reliance upon nuclear weapons, particularly upon large yield weapons, to the ^{impairment} of the conventional capabilities of all services 'this new position included recognition of the need to be able to fight limited war with or without the use of nuclear weapons.'"

"The Air Force would have no part of such thinking. It rejected the idea relative nuclear parity and of mutual deterrents^{ce.}. Some of its spokesmen went so far as to accuse the advocates of ^{philosoph} of betraying the national interest in conceding the possibility of mutual deterrents." (Pages 58-59)

In the debates on the 1958 review of basic national security policy

the ARmy, Navy and Marine Corp all ~~recommended removing~~ from the definition of limited war "recommended removing from the definition of limited war the inference that such wars would be confined to "less-developed areas" (that is, outside Europe)." (Page 59)

In arguing this position before the National Security Council Taylor proposed that "Under mutual deterrents, limited war itself needed to be redefined as armed conflict in which United States national survival was not directly at stake. This new definition would recognize the possibility of armed conflict in such places as the NATO area, which had been excluded in previous definition." (Page 62) "I mentioned the great promise of the very low-yield atomic weapons. Until these low-yield weapons should become available in quantity, we would have to depend on the existing tactical atomic weapons, always bearing in mind that in many limited-war situations we would not wish to use atomic weapons at all."

Generals Twinings and White presented the Air Force point of view, which was to retain unchanged "which was to retain unchanged the previous years statement of "basic national security policy" and hence the status quo insofar as our military strategy was concerned." (Page 64) This position was adopted by Secretary Macelroy thus postponing again until 1959, as Taylor saw it, a struggle to change the basic security policy.

As Taylor wrote in 1959, he foresaw a renewed effort to change the definitions and the policy which continued to be based upon a stable percentage division of the budget funds by service unchanged from year to year from fiscal year 1955 to 1960: about 46% for the Air Force, about 28% for the Navy and the Marine Corp, and about 23% for the Army. With the remainder going to the Department of Defense itself (Page 66)

It was at this point, when Taylor's narrative ends, that my own notes on plans and on the controversies between the services take up. In early 1961 the current strategic war plans refer to fiscal year 1961, fiscal years commencing on July 1 and being dated according to the year in which they end, June 30, twelve months later. Moreover, strategic plans were dated to run concurrently with the corresponding budget programs. Thus, JSCP '61, which ended on June 30, 1961, had become effective 1 July 1960, and the planning process and controversies surrounding it had proceeded from the Summer of 1959.

Make paragraphs
CN = (Nesson), Hovey (Patrick
Ellsberg)

Chau

Chau (Chow)

Herbststein

Herbststein (Herstak)

Norvil

Norvil (Norville)

Barney

Barnett (Barnett)

~~(Pat parent)~~

~~My affs calendar
consulted)~~

Halperin

Quotes in set of

